FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2019

MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING SECTOR UPDATE

A USAID/OFDA implementing partner staff member in Peru demonstrates an intake app used to register beneficiaries for multipurpose cash assistance, part of USAID's Venezuela regional crisis response. *Photo by Julian Wyss/USAID.*

Global Research Advances ME&L in Humanitarian Programs

With $2 million in FY 2019 funding, USAID/OFDA is supporting three research awards that contribute to global best practices for monitoring and evaluation in humanitarian contexts. Through a USAID/OFDA-funded research grant, CARE is expanding its Rapid Gender Analysis toolkit to include innovative qualitative monitoring tools that elevate women's voices and support more gender-responsive and adaptive emergency responses. In addition, the International Rescue Committee is studying real-time evaluation methodologies to determine their usefulness in humanitarian response settings and improve the utilization and adaptation of real-time results. Furthermore, with USAID/OFDA support, the American Refugee Committee's Kuja Kuja program in Colombia is developing a tailored, real-time feedback system for humanitarian partners to better monitor beneficiary satisfaction and improve accountability to affected populations as part of USAID's response to the Venezuela regional crisis.

Randomized Control Trial in Senegal

With joint funding from USAID/OFDA's ME&L and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) teams, Acción contra el Hambre/Spain is conducting a two-year cluster randomized control trial study to evaluate the effects of adding household water treatment and hygiene promotion activities to outpatient treatment programs

USAID/OFDA ME&L Activities
FY 2019 FUNDING

Stand-Alone Global and Regional ME&L Programs	$7,357,969
ME&L Interventions Worldwide	$4,071,038

$11,429,007[1]

Sector Overview

USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) integrates monitoring, evaluation, and learning (ME&L) activities into emergency response and disaster risk reduction programs worldwide to improve the quality of programming, enhance accountability, and ensure that USAID/OFDA-supported assistance is appropriate and effective.

In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA ME&L activities included third-party monitoring programs in complex emergency settings and research activities to develop improved participant feedback mechanisms. USAID/OFDA's ME&L programs complement and build upon ME&L work conducted by USAID/OFDA's implementing partners.

[1] All USAID/OFDA programs incorporate ME&L components. USAID/OFDA FY 2019 ME&L sector funding supported activities in five countries.

(OTPs) for individuals experiencing severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in Senegal. The study aims to assess the impact of integrating simple, scalable WASH interventions—such as hygiene messages and chlorine tablets for treating drinking water—on a standard OTP nutrition treatment for children ages 6–59 months experiencing SAM in order to increase global understanding of ways to utilize complimentary activities to maximize the effectiveness of health, nutrition, and WASH programs.

Internal Evaluation of Syria Programming

In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA's ME&L and Middle East Crisis Humanitarian Response teams collaborated to conduct an internal, mid-term evaluation of multi-year, competitively solicited consortia awards for Syria's complex emergency response. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness, relevance, and efficacy of the multi-year consortium award model for the Syria context. The evaluation team comprised ME&L advisors and Syria humanitarian program staff, who conducted data collection in Amman, Jordan, and Washington, D.C. USAID/OFDA shared the evaluation report with relevant stakeholders, presenting the benefits and challenges of the multi-year consortia model for humanitarian assistance, as well as recommendations for how USAID/OFDA can strengthen internal management processes when using competitive awards. The report concluded that despite the initial start-up complexity, the consortium model resulted in greater harmonization of technical approaches, stronger coordination, and more meaningful risk dialogue among participating organizations.

Third-Party Monitoring in Complex Emergencies

In countries experiencing complex emergencies, security concerns can prevent USAID/OFDA and partner organization staff from conducting regular site visits to monitor program developments. To address this obstacle, USAID/OFDA contracts independent third-party monitors, who have an in-depth understanding of local customs and security conditions, to implement monitoring projects that combine quantitative and qualitative methods—including direct observation, document reviews, focus group discussions, individual interviews, and surveys—for data collection at program sites. The monitors subsequently prepare monthly reports that assist USAID/OFDA and implementing partners in making programmatic adjustments to improve the quality of assistance. Third-party monitoring projects also inform future USAID/OFDA program design and strategic decision making. In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA provided approximately $8.2 million to support third-party monitoring and reporting in complex emergencies.

Developing a Global Guide to Monitoring Emergency Response Activities

In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA continued to support the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP)—a global network comprising academics, donors, members of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, and other stakeholders dedicated to improving humanitarian response mechanisms—to develop a monitoring guide for emergency response activities. In FY 2019, ALNAP completed a study on Humanitarian Leadership and Decision-Making, which is available publically online. ALNAP is also undertaking a study on monitoring longer-term outcomes of humanitarian action. ALNAP is drawing from best practices, lessons learned, and direct experiences among its diverse network to codify available humanitarian monitoring resources in a comprehensive guide. The project aims to provide appropriate tools to build monitoring capacity among humanitarian actors and highlight the importance of monitoring emergency response activities.

Building ME&L Capacity for USAID/OFDA Staff and Partners

In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA conducted capacity-building activities for partner organizations to strengthen ME&L systems and improve data collection quality and analysis to better inform program development. In April 2019, the ME&L team delivered a pilot training to increase USAID/OFDA staff members' ME&L capacity and is delivering additional, related trainings in FY 2020. Developing staff and partner ME&L capacity will help ensure effective assistance across USAID/OFDA-support programs.